

The Bible:  
The Sword of the Spirit

Paul identifies the word of God as the “sword of the Spirit” in Ephesians 6:17 as a part of the armor of God which needs to be put on daily by the believer.

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

The word “sword” is translated from the Koine Greek word μάχαϊραν (“mah-chai-ran”) which referred to a specific type of sword utilized to swiftly slice through whatever target met its blade(s). It served a variety of purposes ranging from being used to execute prisoners under capital punishment to being used to forcefully slice the ligaments and tendons of animals. When Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane he identified that those who came for Him did so possessing this type of sword and clubs. Among the group coming to arrest Jesus was a Roman cohort who carried these swords for their combat weapon. The μάχαϊρα (“mah-chai-rah”) sword was what Peter used to swipe off Malchus ear, narrowly missing killing Malchus entirely. The nature of this sword included a medium to long length, a dense weight for slicing thoroughly through the enemy’s body, and maneuverability to its balance that allowed the well trained user to utilize its length, weight, and balance skillfully to defeat his enemy. In Hebrews 4:12 the word of God is compared to this type of sword being described there as “two-edged.”

“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

The descriptive properties of the μάχαϊρα sword are compared to similar properties of Scripture. This is particularly the case when the well trained user, first and foremost the Holy Spirit, engages in spiritual battle with the word of God as his weapon. God’s word is able to slice through the depths of man’s soul and spirit. God’s word is able to discern and condemn the thoughts and intentions of man’s heart, revealing its inherent wickedness.

The phrase, “able to judge” is translated from the Koine Greek word κριτικὸς (“kri-ti-kos”) which literally means, “capable of coming to a conclusion on what fails to meet the standard as a result of comparing and discerning the activity of another, based on initiation.” God’s word possesses the ability to cut through the thoughts and intentions of man’s beliefs (and, consequently, his actions) coming to a conclusion regarding their failure to meet the righteous standard of God. But put into the hands of the Holy Spirit, the word of God is able to both attack and defend against that which is false, particularly the disseminated propaganda of Satan & Company designed to deceive humanity into an inverted perspective of reality resulting in the increased destruction of God’s standard of righteousness and divine establishments in order that man be brought under Satan’s control in one mind and culture which embraces satanic thought and standards worshiping Satan instead of God.

The Holy Spirit utilizes the word of God toward man for purposes of conviction, instruction, and training in righteousness (cf. John 16:8). But the Holy Spirit also utilizes the word of God through the believer for the purposes of edification (cf. 1 John 2:27; 1 Cor. 12:4-11), defense of the gospel (cf. Luke 12:12, 21:13-15; Matt. 10:20), and to contend for the faith (cf. Jude 1:3-4) through those believers who are obedient to God’s instruction to be controlled by the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph. 5:18). Like the μάχαϊρα, God’s word is the combat weapon of the Holy Spirit which never fails to defeat the enemy’s attacks (cf. Matt 4:4,7,10).